

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA
WAYCROSS DIVISION**

ENRIQUE DE VARONA,

Petitioner,

v.

U.S. ATTORNEY GENERAL JEFF
SESSIONS, et al.,

Respondents.

CIVIL ACTION NO.: 5:17-cv-160

ORDER and MAGISTRATE JUDGE'S REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

This matter comes before the Court on Petitioner's failure to comply with the Court's Order to keep the Court apprised of any change in his address. For the following reasons, I **RECOMMEND** that the Court **DISMISS without prejudice** this action for Petitioner's failure to prosecute. I further **RECOMMEND** that the Court **DENY** Petitioner leave to appeal *in forma pauperis*.

BACKGROUND

On November 2, 2017, Petitioner proceeding *pro se*, filed a Petition pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2241 in the Southern District of Florida. (Doc. 1.) On November 22, 2017, the Southern District of Florida transferred this action to this Court because Petitioner was incarcerated at Folkston Processing Center in Folkston, Georgia which is located in this District. (Doc. 8.) On November 27, 2017, this Court mailed a Notice of Case Transfer to Petitioner at his last known place of residence, D. Ray James. (Doc. 10.) However, the mail was returned undeliverable because Petitioner is no longer at the Prison. (Doc. 11.) Petitioner has not notified

the Court of his change of address or made any effort to inform the Court of his whereabouts. Indeed, Petitioner has not taken any action in this case since November 2, 2017.

DISCUSSION

The Court must now determine how to address Petitioner's failure to keep the court apprised of any changes in his address. For the reasons set forth below, I recommend that the Petitioner be **DISMISSED** and that Petitioner be denied leave to appeal *in forma pauperis*.

I. Dismissal for Failure to Prosecute.

A district court may dismiss a Petitioner's claims sua sponte pursuant to either Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 41(b) ("Rule 41(b)") or the court's inherent authority to manage its docket.¹ Link v. Wabash Railroad Company, 370 U.S. 626 (1962);² Coleman v. St. Lucie Cty. Jail, 433 F. App'x 716, 718 (11th Cir. 2011) (citing Fed. R. Civ. P. 41(b) and Betty K Agencies, Ltd. v. M/V MONADA, 432 F.3d 1333, 1337 (11th Cir. 2005)). In particular, Rule 41(b) allows for the involuntary dismissal of a petitioner's claims where he has failed to prosecute those claims, comply with the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure or local rules, or follow a court order. Fed. R. Civ. P. 41(b); see also Coleman, 433 F. App'x at 718; Sanders v. Barrett, No. 05-12660, 2005 WL 2640979, at *1 (11th Cir. Oct. 17, 2005) (citing Kilgo v. Ricks, 983 F.2d 189, 192 (11th Cir. 1993)); cf. Local R. 41.1(b) ("[T]he assigned Judge may, after notice to counsel of record, sua sponte . . . dismiss any action for want of prosecution, with or without prejudice[,] . . . [based on] willful disobedience or neglect of any order of the Court." (emphasis omitted)).

¹ Pursuant to Rule 12 of the Rules Governing Section 2254 Cases, the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure may apply to a Petitioner's habeas Petition to the extent the Civil Rules are not inconsistent with the Section 2254 Rules. Further, pursuant to Rule 1(b) of the 2254 Rules, the 2254 Rules may be applied to Section 2241 Petitions.

² In Wabash, the Court held that a trial court may dismiss an action for failure to prosecute "even without affording notice of its intention to do so." 370 U.S. at 633.

Additionally, a district court's "power to dismiss is an inherent aspect of its authority to enforce its orders and ensure prompt disposition of lawsuits." Brown v. Tallahassee Police Dep't, 205 F. App'x 802, 802 (11th Cir. 2006) (quoting Jones v. Graham, 709 F.2d 1457, 1458 (11th Cir. 1983)).

It is true that dismissal with prejudice for failure to prosecute is a "sanction . . . to be utilized only in extreme situations" and requires that a court "(1) conclud[e] a clear record of delay or willful contempt exists; and (2) mak[e] an implicit or explicit finding that lesser sanctions would not suffice." Thomas v. Montgomery Cty. Bd. of Educ., 170 F. App'x 623, 625–26 (11th Cir. 2006) (quoting Morewitz v. West of Eng. Ship Owners Mut. Prot. & Indem. Ass'n (Lux.), 62 F.3d 1356, 1366 (11th Cir. 1995)); see also Taylor v. Spaziano, 251 F. App'x 616, 619 (11th Cir. 2007) (citing Morewitz, 62 F.3d at 1366). By contrast, dismissal without prejudice for failure to prosecute is not an adjudication on the merits, and, therefore, courts are afforded greater discretion in dismissing claims in this manner. Taylor, 251 F. App'x at 619; see also Coleman, 433 F. App'x at 719; Brown, 205 F. App'x at 802–03.

While the Court exercises its discretion to dismiss cases with caution, dismissal of this action without prejudice is warranted. See Coleman, 433 F. App'x at 719 (upholding dismissal without prejudice for failure to prosecute Section 1983 complaint, where Petitioner did not respond to court order to supply defendant's current address for purpose of service); Taylor, 251 F. App'x at 620–21 (upholding dismissal without prejudice for failure to prosecute, because Petitioners insisted on going forward with deficient amended complaint rather than complying, or seeking an extension of time to comply, with court's order to file second amended complaint); Brown, 205 F. App'x at 802–03 (upholding dismissal without prejudice for failure to prosecute

Section 1983 claims, where Petitioner failed to follow court order to file amended complaint and court had informed Petitioner that noncompliance could lead to dismissal).

With Petitioner having failed to update the Court with his current address, the Court has no means by which it can communicate with Petitioner. Thus, the Court is unable to move forward with this case. Moreover, Petitioner has been given ample time to notify this Court of his whereabouts, and Petitioner has not made any effort to do so. Indeed, he has not taken any action in this case in over two months. Accordingly, the Court should **DISMISS without prejudice** Petitioner's Section 2241 Petition.

II. Leave to Appeal *in Forma Pauperis*.

The Court should also **DENY** Petitioner leave to appeal *in forma pauperis*. Though Petitioner has, of course, not yet filed a notice of appeal, it is proper to address these issues in the Court's order of dismissal. See Fed. R. App. P. 24(a)(3) (trial court may certify that appeal of party proceeding *in forma pauperis* is not taken in good faith "before or after the notice of appeal is filed").

An appeal cannot be taken *in forma pauperis* if the trial court certifies that the appeal is not taken in good faith. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(3); Fed. R. App. P. 24(a)(3). Good faith in this context must be judged by an objective standard. Busch v. Cnty. of Volusia, 189 F.R.D. 687, 691 (M.D. Fla. 1999). A party does not proceed in good faith when he seeks to advance a frivolous claim or argument. See Coppedge v. United States, 369 U.S. 438, 445 (1962). A claim or argument is frivolous when it appears the factual allegations are clearly baseless or the legal theories are indisputably meritless. Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319, 327 (1989); Carroll v. Gross, 984 F.2d 392, 393 (11th Cir. 1993). An *in forma pauperis* action is frivolous, and thus

not brought in good faith, if it is “without arguable merit either in law or fact.” Napier v. Preslicka, 314 F.3d 528, 531 (11th Cir. 2002); see also Brown v. United States, Nos. 407CV085, 403CR001, 2009 WL 307872, at *1–2 (S.D. Ga. Feb. 9, 2009).

Based on the above analysis of Petitioner’s action, there are no non-frivolous issues to raise on appeal, and an appeal would not be taken in good faith. Thus, the Court should **DENY** Petitioner *in forma pauperis* status on appeal.

CONCLUSION

For the above-stated reasons, I **RECOMMEND** that the Court **DISMISS without prejudice** this action and **DIRECT** the Clerk of Court to enter the appropriate judgment of dismissal and to **CLOSE** this case. I further **RECOMMEND** that the Court **DENY** Petitioner leave to proceed *in forma pauperis* on appeal.

Any party seeking to object to this Report and Recommendation is **ORDERED** to file specific written objections within fourteen (14) days of the date on which this Report and Recommendation is entered. Any objections asserting that the undersigned failed to address any contention raised in the pleading must also be included. Failure to do so will bar any later challenge or review of the factual findings or legal conclusions herein. See 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(C); Thomas v. Arn, 474 U.S. 140 (1985). Objections to a Report and Recommendation are not the proper vehicle to raise issues and arguments not previously brought before the Court. A copy of the objections must be served upon all other parties to the action. Upon receipt of objections meeting the specificity requirement set out above, a United States District Judge will make a de novo determination of those portions of the report, proposed findings, or recommendation to which objection is made and may accept, reject, or modify, in

whole or in part, the findings or recommendations made herein. Objections not meeting the specificity requirement set out above will not be considered by the District Judge.

SO REPORTED and **RECOMMENDED**, this 12th day of January, 2018.



R. STAN BAKER
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA